

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 217 940

JC 820 316

AUTHOR White, Mary; Nichols, Donald D.
 TITLE Assault and Rape Awareness: Using Data and Task Forces to Respond to a Community College Concern.
 PUB DATE Apr 81
 NOTE 13p.
 EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS Community Colleges; *Crime; *Crisis Intervention; Information Dissemination; *Information Services; *Prevention; Program Descriptions; Program Development; *Rape; School Security; Two Year Colleges; Volunteers; Volunteer Training
 IDENTIFIERS *Assaults; *Oakland Community College MI

ABSTRACT

In response to growing concern about assaults and rapes on campus and in the surrounding community, the staff of the Womencenter at Oakland Community College (OCC) initiated a program of rape/assault prevention and assistance to victims. After collecting data on violence in the community and on campus, Womencenter representatives obtained support from the college's Academic Senate for a formal program to deal effectively with concerns about student safety. A collegewide task force was created to devise and implement a continuing program of information, prevention, and assistance. Their activities included the establishment of procedures for reporting assaults, for providing medical examinations and care for victims, and for counseling or referral; providing self-defense classes; and sponsoring informational forums. Additional activities included the production of a brochure on steps to take if one becomes a victim, the development of presentations on the problem of violence for in-class use, and the provision of additional telephones and improved lighting on campus. Another aspect of OCC's program was the recruitment and training of student and community volunteers to provide support and information for rape/assault victims. Following screening procedures to ensure the participants' compatibility with the intent of the program, volunteers attended an orientation session and a ten-hour seminar on assault. College and public response to the program has been positive. (HB)

 * Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
 * from the original document. *

ED217940

ASSAULT AND RAPE AWARENESS:

Using Data and Task Forces to Respond
to a Community College Concern

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Donald D. Nichols

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.

☒ Minor changes have been made to improve
reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-
ment do not necessarily represent official NIE
position or policy.

Mary White, Counselor
Donald D. Nichols, Ph.D.
Academic Dean
Oakland Community College
Farmington, Michigan

April, 1981

JC 820 316

ABSTRACT

ASSAULT AND RAPE AWARENESS: USING DATA AND
TASK FORCES TO RESPOND TO A COMMUNITY COLLEGE CONCERN

Recognizing a concern about physical assault and rape statistics in the metropolitan Detroit community, staff in the Womencenter at Oakland Community College initiated a program of prevention and assistance to victims. After collecting data on the incidence of violence in the community and College environments, representatives of the Womencenter approached the College Academic Senate for support of a formal program to effectively deal with the concern about student safety. Representing the students and staff at the multi-campus, 23,000 student college, the Academic Senate is a policy-recommending body. Support of the Senate is crucial to successful implementation of any plan of action affecting the academic community.

After obtaining support for a policy statement on preventing physical assault, the Womencenter requested the creation of campus and college Task Forces to further investigate the problem and provide possible solutions. Including representatives from the student body, faculty, administration, public safety, and secretarial-classified staff, the Task Forces discussed concerns found on the 5 campuses, 9 extension centers, and in the surrounding community. In cooperation with police agencies and the County Crisis Center, a program of prevention and assistance to assault and rape victims was designed. It specifically included improving campus lighting systems, increasing telephone availability for reporting purposes, establishing a network for handling assault and rape emergencies, and creating a group of volunteers to assist victims of violence.

One unique aspect of the plan was the use of volunteers who were trained to serve as advocates or peer counselors for students who did encounter violence or abuse. After screening, volunteers participated in a 10-hour training module on assisting assault victims, and were taught counseling skills designed for this purpose. Following training, the volunteers were awarded certificates from the Assault Task Force, issued I.D. cards, and assigned to the campuses.

From the time of endorsement by the Academic Senate to the completion of volunteers training, periodic progress reports were made by the Task Forces to the academic community. It took approximately one year to accomplish the goals originally delineated by the Womencenter. During the coming year an evaluation will be made of the assault prevention program and based on the collected data, revisions and needed corrections will be made. Response to the program has been very positive and there is a general feeling that the College is a safer place and that students are better informed on ways to prevent physical assault and rape.

In conclusion it should be said that the originators of the Oakland program believe that it will serve as a model for other institutions seeking solutions for a serious social problem.

ASSAULT AND RAPE AWARENESS: USING DATA AND TASK FORCES
TO RESPOND TO A COMMUNITY COLLEGE CONCERN

"According to the F.B.I. time clock, a woman is raped every 7 minutes."
Time, March 25, 1981.

In a social climate saturated with reports of violence and assault, there is a sense of urgency attached to identifying causes and proposing solutions that work. As an institution located in the community, the two-year college is not immune from the conflict that too-often emerges between individuals. While some national statistics on violence and crime are subject to debate, there appears to be a pervasive belief that the average citizen is likely to become a victim. A critical question that arises for educational institutions located in this environment centers on problem identification and probable solutions. How can the urban community college respond effectively to the perception and reality of violence and physical assault? Spotlighting the problem of rape, how can task forces be employed to investigate, publicize, and prevent the increase of this kind of assault? What eventually developed in answering these questions is diagrammed in Figure 1. (Page 9)

The Setting and the Problem

As an urban institution located in metropolitan Detroit, Oakland is a multi-campus community college with an enrollment of 23,000 students. Reflecting the community it serves, the College student body is predominately middle-class, has a 55-45% female-male ratio with a good representation of minority student enrollment at 5 different campus locations. A variety of two-year vocational/

technical career programs are offered by the College as well as the traditional university transfer curriculum. A full complement of courses are offered at all campus locations during day and evening hours.

Impetus for confronting the issue of physical assault and rape was provided by the College's Womencenter, a student-faculty organization created to deal with the concerns of women on the campus and in the community. Following a series of assaults and rapes in the surrounding community and on the campus during 1980, the Womencenter collected data on the problem at the local and national level. Looking at the incidence of rape specifically, some statistics dramatized the problem: the increase of rape over the past five years in every U.S. community appeared well-documented. In Oakland County, the location of the College, rapes reported to the police increased 27% between 1977 and 1978 (from 231 to 300 rapes in 1978). The Womencenter noted that since only 1 out of 4 rapes is ever reported, the above figures should be multiplied 3 times.

Upon further investigation the Womencenter staff also discovered that in Michigan concerned citizen response to violent crime has resulted in progressive legislation and anti-rape programs that serve as models nationally. The following are three examples of what is possible. First, the Detroit Rape Counseling Center, based at Detroit General Hospital, and working in conjunction with a special Sex Crime Unit of the Detroit Police Force, was begun in 1975 and is funded by the city. Second, Michigan's rape laws were reformed in 1975 and the new Michigan Criminal Sexual Conduct laws are more humane in their treatment of rape victims. Third, the Oakland County Center for Rape and Sexual Abuse, located in Pontiac, is providing training sessions for Oakland County Police officers.

With cooperation of the College Public Safety office, Counseling Departments, and the Administration, the Womencenter accumulated data on physical assaults and reported rapes in the immediate community and on the campuses. While the findings did not reveal dramatic increases in local crimes of assault, the investigation did uncover a significant concern for student safety and a need to emphasize prevention. Also, there was a firm conviction on the part of the Womencenter staff that a program of assault and rape awareness would result in better reporting of rape cases and a greater sensitivity to assisting victims. It was also noted that inherent in the nature of the multi-campus community college is a problem with student-faculty-administration communication. This problem is further enhanced when over 10,000 of the 23,000 students are attending night classes at five different campuses and 9 extension centers.

On the basis of the above information, the objective of the Womencenter staff was the development of a College-wide policy and program aimed at educating the constituency about the problem and, with the creation of campus Task Forces, designing an on-going process which would emphasize prevention and assist most rape victims as needed. With clearly-defined inter-campus communication channels, maximum support of the College leadership (both staff and students) and a trained cadre of volunteers, it was believed that the goals of prevention and assistance could be achieved.

Plan of Action

Because the success of the prevention program depended on support of representatives from the total College community, the concern about assault and rape was taken to the Academic Senate. With representatives from faculty,

students, administration and classified/secretarial staffs, this body is a forum for presenting, discussing, and making recommendations on any issue of concern to the educational community. The College Academic Senate is composed of representatives from the Campus Senates. Therefore, the support of this body was crucial to effectively dealing with the problem.

After mailing information about the assault and rape awareness proposal to Senate members, spokespersons from the Womencenter made proposals to the Campus and College Senates. After solicitating support for a College-wide policy statement of concern, the Womencenter representatives requested the creation of a Task Force to recommend and implement a continuing program of information, prevention and assistance. With Academic Senate endorsement, Task Forces were created at each campus and these made recommendations to a coordinating all-College Task Force. The College-wide group included four representatives from each Campus Senate (a student, professor, administrator, and classified member), a consultant from the County Rape and Abuse Center, a Campus public safety officer, a Womencenter representative, and a College nurse. During the ensuing months, the Task Forces addressed several issues. Some activities were:

- A. Do research by collecting information from other community colleges and universities on existing assault and rape policies and procedures.
- B. Assure adequate campus law enforcement and security patrolling as well as lighting of all college parking lots and other precautionary measures.
- C. Establish and make public procedures for reporting sexual assaults to campus public safety officers.
- D. Establish and publicize procedures with community police departments near each campus for law enforcement follow up and coordinated reporting procedures.

- E. Establish and publicize procedures with campus nurses and/or local hospital near each campus for medical exam and care for victim.
- F. Create effective procedures with campus Womencenters for supportive counseling/and or referral to Rape Crisis Centers.
- G. Provide sexual conduct training sessions taught by the Oakland County Center For Rape and Sexual Abuse for college public safety officers and security guards to educate and sensitize them to particular problems related to sexual assault.
- H. Provide a class in self defense for women to be taught each semester on each campus.
- I. Develop and print a brochure in conjunction with community agencies stating:
 - 1. The College's sexual conduct policy and procedures.
 - 2. State of Michigan laws pertaining to sexual conduct.
 - 3. Listing of Metro area Rape Crisis Centers, Campus Womencenters, and other agencies available in the community for counseling and support services for assault and rape victims.
 - 4. Brochure to be included in college admissions packet of materials for new students.
- J. Sponsor community/campus forums to be held on each campus following adoption of sexual conduct policy to educate public regarding new policy.
- K. Sponsor forums on the problem of violence and assault in American society.

The successful completion of the above activities was possible because of wide-spread community support. Resource people from local agencies and the County Crisis Center provided additional data, suggestions, and possible solutions which were analyzed by the Campus Task Force. Newspaper, radio, and T.V. announcements and releases generated significant citizen involvement as well. Regular reports were made to the College Academic Senate and specific plans of action were approved. The implementation of a plan for preventing assaults and rapes at the College and for assisting victims occurred as follows:

- 1. Information on the policy of concern for preventing violence was widely distributed to the academic and surrounding community. Over 10,000 brochures were distributed to new students at each registration spelling out steps to take if one becomes a victim.

2. Videotape and slide presentations were made for classroom use by professors teaching units on the problem of violence.
3. A network of communication was specifically designed to inform appropriate personnel when potential for assault occurred. This network centered on the Campus switchboard operators who have immediate contact with Public Safety officers. It also included College audio-visual staff as resource contacts because of their availability by two-way radio.
4. Additional telephones were placed in student parking lots and improvements were made in Campus lighting.
5. A group of student and community advocates were trained to counsel with and assist victims. A detailed training component was provided for these volunteers and is defined below.

Training Volunteers As Peer Counselors

While several actions were taken to help reduce the amount and possibility of future assaults and rape attempts, one unique product of the Task Forces' recommendations was the creation of a body of volunteers (advocates) to work with rape victims. In cooperation with the Oakland County Police Academy (run by the College) and the County Crisis Center, a training component for volunteers was developed. Based on a philosophy of peer counseling, a job description for Volunteer Assistant Advocates (V.A.A.) was written as follows:

PURPOSE:

To assist victims of on-campus physical and/or sexual assault by providing comfort, empathic and emotional support and necessary pertinent information.

REQUIREMENTS:

The V.A.A. will be a member of the Oakland Community College staff or a student.

EDUCATION:

The V.A.A. will attend the 10 hour college seminar on assault.

EXPECTATIONS:

The V.A.A. will:

1. attend an on-campus orientation session

2. attend the 10 hour seminar on assault
3. be knowledgeable regarding procedures, information, resources and referrals, as learned in the seminar
4. be reachable during their chosen volunteer hours
5. be willing to accompany the victim to the hospital or the police station, if necessary or desired by the victim
6. be willing and able to assist the victim in an emergency plan (transportation, phone calls, etc.)
7. be caring, empathic, supportive, and serve as a calming influence
8. possess good communication skills and be nonjudgemental
9. adhere to the principle of confidentiality
10. be willing to be a court witness on behalf of the victim, if necessary
11. be willing to participate in continuing education for volunteers.

Prior to training, all volunteers were screened to assure their compatibility with the intent of the program. Persons who completed the sessions were awarded identification cards as advocates and certificates from the Academic Senate Task Force on Physical and Sexual Assault. Assignments were made to each Campus and provisions were made for updating contacts with victims and the sharing of experiences.

Conclusions

One year has elapsed from the time of inception of a declared concern to the stationing of advocates on each campus. It is the belief of the persons involved that what has been accomplished has been extremely important. Starting with data collection and utilizing successful Task Forces, a plan of action was brought to fruition. The College Academic Senate, students, and community groups are enthusiastic about the progress that has been made. While not

documented by research to date, there is a dominant perception that the College is a safer place and that students are better informed about services available.

During the next 12 months an evaluation of the assault and rape prevention program will be made. Student surveys will be conducted, advocates will be queried about their contacts, and the information network will be analyzed. With this information, necessary revisions will be made to improve the program. In lieu of these findings, persons responsible for what has already been accomplished believe that what has been described here can serve as model for other colleges seeking solutions to a serious social problem.

FIGURE 1

A FLOW CHART FOR ASSAULT & RAPE AWARENESS

